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**BOOK REVIEWS**

*Modern Mythology.* By Andrew Lang, M. A., LL.D. London and New York, 1897, Longmans, Green & Company.

This author and his work are too well known to need an introduction, but we see him in a new light and one so uncharacteristic of him that as we read these pages but for an occasional glimpse of familiar quotations and expressions we are apt to wonder if it is the same man.

“It may well be doubted,” says Mr Lang in his introduction, “whether works of controversy serve any useful purpose. ‘On an opponent,’ as Mr Matthew Arnold said, ‘one never does make any impression,’ though one may hope that controversy sometimes illuminates a topic in the eyes of impartial readers. The pages which follow cannot but seem wandering and desultory, for they are a reply to a book, Mr Max Müller’s ‘Contributions to the Science of Mythology,’ in which the attack is of a skirmishing character.”

This latter clause the author makes use of as a justification for a veiled, yet apparent, personal attack upon his opponent in a “wandering and scattering” manner, totally unworthy of this eminent writer and at variance to his usual courteous and considerate treatment of the opinions of others.

He charges Mr Müller with unfairness in the presentation of his opinion that the philological is the proper method of studying mythology, based upon the “disease of language.”

Mr Lang holds that the proper method is the anthropological, and, like the American school, considers the study of culture evolution and distribution by means of language as only one branch, and an inconclusive one at that, of the anthropological method, the substituting of only a part of the evidence for the whole.

He lays great stress upon the evidences of totemism, and gives the views of Frazer, MacLennan, Robertson-Smith, Sayce, Müller, and himself, showing great difference of opinion, and turning to American students for confirmation and for their material, a fact worthy of note, for European writers and scholars are beginning to learn the value of the work done in this country (see also “Beginnings of Art”) and to see, after all, that

"that which the builders rejected has become the chief stone of the corner," for at last something good has come out of America.

The clearest exposition of the totem is that by Miss Alice C. Fletcher in a paper entitled "The Import of the Totem," read before the American Association for the Advancement of Science, August, 1897, in which she says: "The foundation of the Indian's faith in the efficacy of the totem rested upon his belief concerning nature and life. This belief was complex and involved two prominent ideas: first, that all things, animate and inanimate, were permeated by a common life, and, second, that this life could not be broken, but was continuous."

Briefly, then, totems in general terms were the symbolic representations of what the youth saw in his vision when he reached the age of puberty and passed through the ceremony connected with that event, and did not lie along the line of natural or blood relationship, nor was there any connection with ancestor worship. The association of those into societies or gens who had a common or associated form of totem as a social institution was the other purpose of the totem. In other words, it seems that in some degree, at least, the modern secret and fraternal organizations are a survival of totemism, which in some form has been world-wide in its distribution.

J. H. MCCORMICK, M. D.

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*The Beginnings of Art.* By Ernst Grosse, Ph. D. New York, 1897, D. Appleton & Company.

This is one of that excellent series edited by Prof. Frederick Starr, known as the Anthropological Series, of which "Woman's Share in Primitive Culture," by Mason, and "The Beginnings of Writing," by Hoffman, are prior publications, and illustrate in detail two phases of culture of which, among others, "The Beginnings of Art" treats: first, woman is the aboriginal decorator in the primitive fictile and technical arts, and, second, pictographs and glyphs, the foundation of writing, was an art in a dual sense.

The author does not claim for this pioneer in a new and wide field an exhaustive study, but simply to lay a foundation for wider research upon scientific lines, and to lay before the investigator some pertinent questions to the solution of which he should endeavor to direct his efforts. His treatment of the sub-